

# Arizona's Reading First FAQs

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
1. What is SBRR?	This acronym stands for “scientifically-based reading research”. This is research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties.
2. <i>Do you have suggestions on how to measure the quality of leadership?</i>	Instructional leaders and managerial leaders send a consistent message that all students can and will read at grade level or above by the end of third grade. Instructional leaders possess expertise in reading processes, instructional strategies and materials, SBRR, and assessment. They help teachers use assessment results on an ongoing basis to monitor student progress and make data-based instructional decisions. They provide modeling, coaching, and support to improve classroom instruction. They assist teachers in tracking the progress of each student to insure continuous progress. Managerial leaders may or may not be the same individuals as instructional leaders, depending in the size of the schools and/or district. Managerial leaders coordinate grant activities, assure that the necessary professional development is provided and that programs are implemented, collect and monitor data, conduct project evaluation activities, monitor and manage the budget, and assure that the commitments required of the schools and LEA are fulfilled.
3. <i>What is the difference between “supplement” and “supplant”?</i>	To “supplement” a program means to extend or strengthen a program through additional funding. Whereas, “supplanting” a program entails replacing the funding source.
4. <i>How should LEAs select eligible schools?</i>	LEAs should use a school selection process that makes the most sense for their needs. Low achievement and poverty levels must be taken into account. ADE also suggests that LEAs balance such factors as readiness for change and capacity.
5. <i>How many schools within an LEA can receive funding?</i>	Ultimately, this is a district decision based on funding and capacity for change.
6. <i>Are the grants going to be given to LEAs or individual schools?</i>	The LEA is the fiscal agent. Therefore, funds will flow through the LEA to the school(s).
7. <i>To get more than one school within a district funded, how should the proposal</i>	The LEAs proposal is a plan that may encompass one or more school sites and does not require separate responses on a school-by-school basis.

<i>be written?</i>	(reference <i>General Instructions</i> )
8. <i>How can a district with a smaller base funding amount be competitive in this process? For example, a district's base funding amount could be \$2,000 but the expected request per school is at least \$100,000.</i>	LEA's base funding amounts have been provided only as a guide to determine the minimum amount of a grant request. ADE projects that it will take approximately \$100,000 to support a quality RF site – regardless of its LEA's base funding amount.
9. <i>Will there be a second round of grants?</i>	Yes. After the initial grant competition in spring 2003, a second opportunity will be offered in spring 2005 contingent on the availability of federal dollars.
10. <i>Is the amount of the grant over three years or per year for three years?</i>	The grant amount is awarded every year for 3 years, assuming that adequate yearly progress in reading is being made.
11. <i>If our application is approved, how will the funds be made available to the district?</i>	As this is a federal program, LEAs are not allowed to have federal cash on hand for more than 30 days. Therefore, a reimbursement process is used just as in other federal grant awards.
12. <i>Can this grant be used to pay for instructional materials for professional development and classroom activities? Do we pay for coaches out of these grant dollars?</i>	Yes. These are required elements of the grant application.
13. <i>Can we hire additional staff with Reading First funds? Can grant funds be used to hire an additional kindergarten teacher to implement a full day kindergarten program? Can we use our Reading First funds to pay for classroom instructional aides?</i>	No. The only personnel costs designated are for the full time literacy coach, although up to 3.5% of the grant may be used for administrative costs. The use for these funds must be consistent with the <i>Federal Requirement for Grant Activities</i> .
14. <i>With a "cost-effective" budget will there be a norm or standard for teacher stipends for summer academies (e.g., \$100 per day)?</i>	No. The use of stipends is a local decision. If you decide to budget for stipends, the amount for teacher stipends is also a local decision.
15. <i>Does State professional development come out of local grants?</i>	There will be a cost for trainings and lodging, stipends/professional development pay, substitutes, mileage, and some meals will also need to be covered by grant dollars or by some other source.
16. <i>When will districts be able to draw down funds to pay for coaches?</i>	Funds will be available to approved applicants in late spring 2003.
Staff	
17. <i>Do literacy coaches have to be full-time? What about a small district that doesn't need or can't afford a full-time person?</i>	The application specifies that a literacy coach be hired for every 30 teachers. The minimum expectation is that coaches work with each teacher twice a month, plus participate in monthly team planning meetings. The budget request should be sufficient to cover this cost.

18. <i>We have several schools that qualify for RF, but do not have enough teachers to justify one coach per school. Can we split a coach between one or more schools?</i>	Assuming that all RF responsibilities can be met, a coach may be shared between schools.
19. <i>Our school already has literacy coaches. Can we just build on their existing knowledge and send them to the summer academies?</i>	Yes. Coaches working with K-3 reading teachers would be expected to attend the summer academies. To avoid concerns about supplanting, remember to be clear in the application that grant dollars are going toward coaches who are working on RF activities.
20. <i>Is it feasible for a teacher to also play the coach role?</i>	Applicants will have to seriously consider this issue. The concern is that a teacher may not be able to effectively maintain both roles at the same time. A coach has to have the flexibility to observe teachers and provide feedback throughout the day as the other teachers are available. It also depends on the number of teachers that will require coaching. If a split teacher/coach position makes sense for a school, a solid rationale and well-thought out plan will need to be provided in the application.
21. <i>What criteria might we use to hire our literacy coaches?</i>	<p>The following are guidelines schools may want to consider when hiring a literacy coach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MA or endorsement in Reading with SBRR knowledge base;</li> <li>• At least 3-5 years of literacy teaching experience, preferably with K-3 at-risk students, demonstration of proven success in teaching students to read and write;</li> <li>• Experience with cognitive coaching, peer coaching and/or critical friends;</li> <li>• Respected and recommended by peers and school leadership;</li> <li>• Skilled at building and facilitating a team of teachers;</li> <li>• Skilled at bringing teachers out of isolation</li> <li>• 3 year commitment to school and grant;</li> <li>• Able to interpret assessment data, both formal and informal to drive instruction;</li> <li>• Demonstration of ongoing professional learning;</li> <li>• Excellent oral and written communication skills; and</li> <li>• Experience teaching English Language Learners (if applicable).</li> </ul>
22. <i>The application specifies that all K-3 teachers must be involved. Does this include Title I, ELL and SPED staff?</i>	Yes, these specialized staff should be included in Reading First staff development activities.
Professional Development/ Arizona Comprehensive Reading Academies (ACRAs)	
<i>When and where will the summer academies be</i>	School teams will only attend <u>one</u> of the following summer academies:

<i>held? Do we have to attend all of the academies?</i>	<i>(Please refer to the ADE website for locations and times).</i>
	<p>June Academy Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16<sup>th</sup> –19<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• 23<sup>rd</sup> -26<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>
	<p>July Academy Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• 28<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup></li> </ul>
	<p>August Academy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>
23. <i>Will all Arizona Comprehensive Reading Academy (ACRA) activities be based on SBRR?</i>	Yes. ACRA activities will be designed to support assessment and instructional practices that are grounded in scientifically-based reading research.
24. <i>What content will be covered during the 4 days of training during the summer?</i>	<p>Professional development will focus on high quality, comprehensive K-3 classroom reading instruction for all children. The content will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AZ articulated K-3 Reading Standards and its alignment with ARS § 15-704;</li> <li>• Theoretical preparation in the essential components of reading; training in the explicit, systematic and purposeful teaching of the five components: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;</li> <li>• Information, demonstration, and active practice with scientifically-based instructional strategies, programs, and materials to efficiently and effectively master, integrate and align teacher's instructional practices to meet students' needs;</li> <li>• Instruction in differentiating and scaffolding instruction guided by data-driven assessments; and</li> <li>• Special Education and ELL differentiated instruction routines will be embedded in ACRA's.</li> </ul>
25. <i>Will there be opportunities for new teachers to get basic foundational training? How about teachers that cannot attend the initial training?</i>	Yes. Summer academies will be repeated by grade level beginning in September 2003.
26. <i>Are school teams expected to attend the summer academy at the same time or can they go separately?</i>	School teams are expected to attend the summer academy together. Time will be allotted at the academies for school planning and decision-making.
27. <i>Can we just send our coaches to the summer academy and use a trainer-of-trainer model to share the information</i>	No. All K-3 reading staff (regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, reading specialists, ELL teachers) are expected to participate in the ACRA's.

<i>with the rest of our K-3 staff?</i>	
28. <i>Can anyone, including those folks that were not awarded a grant, attend the academies?</i>	Due to the large number of participants to be trained, priority will be given to participants from funded schools. However, as space allows, if there are remaining slots, those will be made available to other LEAs/geographic school districts and their schools. The plan is to make this opportunity more widely available soon.
29. <i>Will there be credit (e.g., college credit) given for the 10-day workshops?</i>	ADE is exploring a credit option for this professional development. However, we will be giving professional development hours towards recertification.
30. <i>Will principals be able to attend the academies along with their staff?</i>	Principals are <i>expected</i> to attend the ACRA's. There will be specific breakout sessions that will allow principals to address key literacy issues, performance standards for RF, and building professional learning communities. Additional breakout sessions will also be designed for grade specific issues, coaching, special education, ELL, and Title I.
31. <i>Are third/fourth grade teachers that "wrap around" every other year to stay with their students eligible to attend ACRA's?</i>	Yes, if enough slots are open for them. If not, then teachers who are going to be teaching 3 <sup>rd</sup> graders in August 2003 would attend the initial training in summer 2003. The next cohort (teaching 3 <sup>rd</sup> graders in August 2004) would attend the ACRA's the following summer.
32. <i>Will instructional aides be able to attend the summer academies?</i>	Currently, instructional aides are not included in the staff expected to attend the summer academies. This option will be reconsidered depending on the number of expected participants. In addition, linkage to other programs and opportunities (e.g., Title I) is being explored.
33. <i>Can teachers "test out" of the summer academies?</i>	No. All K-3 teachers are <i>expected</i> to attend a summer academy.
34. <i>As we are beginning to look at our calendar, how should we plan for the eight professional development and collaborative days during the year? Are you coming to us for the training? When should we place the dates?</i>	We will provide both more localized and regional trainings for the eight days of professional development during the 2003-2004 school year. Specific dates will be announced.
Reading Programs	
35. <i>How does ADE define "core reading program"?</i>	<p>(See the <i>A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3</i>. on the ADE website Adapted from Simmons and Kame'enui) a core reading program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the principal instructional tool that teachers use to teach children to learn to read in order to achieve at or above grade level;</li> <li>• Meets the instructional needs of all children within the classroom through differentiation of instruction;</li> <li>• Is guided by ongoing assessment;</li> <li>• Addresses the five essential components of reading systematically and</li> </ul>

	<p>coherently; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be enriched by other materials and strategies to provide a comprehensive, coordinated program of instruction.</li> </ul>
36. <i>Is there a list of the programs reviewed by ADE?</i>	Yes. You will receive a copy of the review summary at the workshop or upon request.
37. <i>How are the core program materials being reviewed?</i>	ADE worked with a panel of experts to review materials' alignment with the five reading components. This panel used an evaluation tool adapted from Simmons and Kame'enui, <i>A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3</i> . Keep in mind that this matrix only contains information on programs from vendors that submitted their materials. A district may have other materials to be reviewed. ADE's protocol for reviewing materials is available on the ADE website, <a href="http://www.ade.az.gov">www.ade.az.gov</a>
38. <i>We are looking at a program that was not evaluated by the state. What process do we use to ensure an evaluation? What is the timeline?</i>	ADE's review of core reading programs has been completed. However, the same tool (an adaptation of Simmons and Kame'enui's <i>A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3</i> ) that the panel used to review materials is available for district use.
39. <i>We currently use one of the core reading programs reviewed by ADE, but it is an earlier edition. Do we still need to evaluate the 97 series to see if it will qualify for the Reading First grant?</i>	Publishers update their materials on a regular basis, especially most recently in response to NCLB. Therefore, it is recommended that you pay close attention to the edition year. It would be wise to conduct your own review of the materials to determine how well aligned they are with the five reading components. Regardless of who reviews a core reading program (e.g., ADE, district), your application <u>must provide</u> evidence that the program fits within the school's instructional design.
40. <i>I heard a rumor that we would be expected to adopt a core/comprehensive reading program. Is that true? Do we have to purchase a core/comprehensive reading program?</i>	No. However, applicants are expected to have adopted a core reading program that meets the definition.
41. <i>Do all schools in an application have to do the same thing?</i>	No. The primary consideration is that reading programs used at each school be comprehensive in how they address the five reading components and SBRR. The Critical Analysis Tool helps assess core reading programs regarding these expectations. In addition, the program must be appropriate for the needs of the population at the site. An application is strengthened by showing evidence of focus, consistent practices, and leveraging resources.
42. <i>Can a district adopt a program and adjust the use of the materials in sound instructional way?</i>	Yes. Recognizing that even the best reading programs cannot meet all of the needs of all students, educators with a foundational knowledge of reading should have the freedom to make adjustments where necessary. Ongoing professional development and coaching will empower teachers to make the sound decisions that may or may not be shared in a teacher's manual.

43. <i>How can we access supplemental or intervention instructional materials? Will ADE use a similar process for reviewing supplemental or intervention materials as was used for evaluating core reading programs</i>	ADE will not review supplemental or intervention instructional materials. However, the same tool used to review core reading programs may be used to review these materials, as appropriate.
44. <i>If we are writing the grant for a core program the first year, should we include intervention and supplemental materials in this initial grant with the intent of purchasing them in year 2?</i>	Your application must lay out a plan for each of the three years of the grant. However, your plan may be revised during the grant based on the needs of the school.
Assessments	
45. <i>Will schools be expected to change assessments if the district assessments are not on the valid and reliable list?</i>	Reading First schools will be expected to use DIBELS and Texas Primary Reading Inventory. They may use additional assessments that are reliable and valid. (See ADE website for assessments that met the review criteria.)
46. <i>Are all of the assessments (screening, diagnostic, classroom progress, monitoring, and outcome) expected to be valid and reliable?</i>	The federal expectation is that Reading First grant funded activities are SBRR based and that they utilize technically rigorous assessment processes that yield quality information for enhancing instruction and student achievement. Funds were approved for Arizona based on that expectation.
47. <i>Will all assessments have to be administered by classroom teachers, or can an assessment team be used?</i>	The focus of the Reading First initiative is to prepare K-3 teachers to identify and overcome reading barriers for their students. For this reason, classroom teachers will be the primary administrators of reading assessments, especially progress monitoring tools intended to drive instruction. Research indicates that a more valid score can be obtained when a student is more comfortable with the person administering the assessment. On the other hand, local circumstances during the early developmental stages of the grant may indicate the need for a coach or an assessment team to administer certain assessments.